



10th May 2024

Dear Parents/Carers,

All schools in the UK have recently been sent information from the National Crime Agency raising awareness of the recent rise in reporting of financially motivated sexual extortion (a type of online blackmail often known in the media as 'sextortion'). Children and young people worldwide are being targeted. This type of crime involves an adult offender (often from an organised crime group based overseas) threatening to release nude or semi-nude images and/or videos of a child or young person, unless they pay money, or meet another financial demand, such as purchasing a pre-paid gift card.

Victims of any age and gender can be targets, however a large proportion of cases have involved male victims aged 14-18. A child or young person is never to blame if they have been a victim. Offenders will have tricked, groomed and/or manipulated them into sharing an image. Find out more about online blackmail on CEOP Education's parents and carers website:

<https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents/articles/online-blackmail/>

Below is advice from the National Crime Agency which explains how you can protect your child and what to do if your child is a victim of financially motivated sexual extortion. Please read the following carefully:

How can I protect my child?

Talking to your child

It's important to have frequent, open and non-judgemental conversations with your child about relationships, sex and being online to build trust and support them if something goes wrong. Financially motivated sexual extortion should be included in those conversations. Here are some tips about how to approach this:

1. **Chat regularly about their life online:** have ongoing conversations with them about their life and time online. Continue to take an interest as they grow, explore new apps and sites together and talk in a balanced way, considering the benefits and the potential harms.



2. **Talk about where to find information about relationships and sex:** the following organisations have age-appropriate advice topics such as sexual communication and image sharing. This will help your child to understand what unhealthy relationships look like, such as applying pressure and blackmail and will give you trusted sources of information.
[CEOP Education \(thinkuknow.co.uk\)](https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk), [Childline | Childline](#)
[Sexual Health & Wellbeing - Brook – Fighting for healthy lives](#)
3. **Review privacy settings:** talk to your child about the importance of using privacy settings on their accounts to restrict who can contact them. Read CEOP Education’s advice on how to talk your child about their privacy settings: [A parent's guide to privacy settings \(thinkuknow.co.uk\)](https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk)
4. **Make sure they know where to go for support:** let them know that they can come to you with any concerns and won’t be judged. It’s also important to make them aware of other trusted adults or sources of support, if they feel they can’t talk to you, such as Childline (see link above).
5. **Make sure they know where to report:** remind your child how you can help them to report an incident to the police or using the CEOP Safety Centre. Let them know that if a nude or semi-nude of them has been shared without their consent, they can take these 3 steps to try and get them removed:
 - a) Use Report Remove, a tool from Childline and the Internet Watch Foundation.
Your child can use this to remove images that have been shared or might be shared.
[Report Remove | Childline](#)
 - b) Use Take It Down, a tool from the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children. Your child can use this to remove or stop the online sharing of images or videos.
[Take It Down \(ncmec.org\)](https://www.ncmec.org)
 - c) Report directly to the platform or app that the incident has occurred on. For advice on how to report to major social media platforms, visit Internet Matters:
[Report online issues to protect your child | Internet Matters](#)



What can I do if this has happened to my child?

If your child tells you that someone is trying to trick, threaten or blackmail them online:

Don't pay, do stop contact and block: you may be tempted to pay, but there is no guarantee that this will stop the threats. As the offender's motive is to get money, once you have shown you can pay, they will likely ask for more and blackmail may continue. If you have paid, don't panic but don't pay anything more. Help your child to stop all communication with the offender and block them on any accounts that they have been contacted on.

Avoid deleting anything: try not to delete anything that could be used as evidence such as messages, images and bank account details.

Report to the Police, CEOP and to the Safeguarding Team at Manor House School or CEOP: call 101 or 999 if there is an immediate risk of harm to your child. Or you can use the CEOP Safety Centre to report any online blackmail attempts: [CEOP Safety Centre](#)

What can I do if my child has already shared an image and sent money to someone exploiting them?

Reassure them that they've done the right thing by telling you: make sure they know they are not to blame for what has happened and they have done the right thing to ask for your help. Children and young people's mental health may be negatively impacted by experiences of exploitation; you can find advice on looking after your child's mental health from the NHS:

[Children's mental health - Every Mind Matters - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](http://www.nhs.uk)

Report to the police or CEOP: call 101 or 999 if there is an immediate risk of harm to your child. Or you can use the CEOP Safety Centre (link above) to report an incident.

Report any images or videos that have been shared as detailed above.

All staff members at MHS are aware of this national rise in the reporting of financially motivated sexual extortion and will report any concerns directly to the Safeguarding Team who will take the appropriate action. Finally, a reminder that [Home Learning Hub – Featured Resources - Safer Schools \(oursaferschools.co.uk\)](http://oursaferschools.co.uk) offers free access to a wealth of resources to support parents and carers help their children be safer online.

Yours faithfully,

The Senior Management Team



Acorn Education And Care



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